BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 08632 553 5

№ 7551.242

THE TRUSTEES OF THE
PUBLIC LIBRARY
OMNIVM
LVX
CIVIVM
OF THE CITY OF
BOSTON
1852 · 1878

# Authority in Religion:

A

# SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

## ORDINATION OF EDWIN M. WHEELOCK,

AS PASTOR OF THE

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH IN DOVER, N.H.

JANUARY 7, 1857.

7551.242

BY

ANDREW P. PEABODY,

PASTOR OF THE SOUTH CHURCH IN PORTSMOUTH, N.H.

WITH THE

CHARGE AND RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

BOSTON:

CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY,

111, WASHINGTON STREET.

1857.

Authority in Religion:

A

# SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

## ORDINATION OF EDWIN M. WHEELOCK,

AS PASTOR OF THE

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH IN DOVER, N.H.

JANUARY 7, 1857.

7551.242

BY

ANDREW P. PEABODY,

PASTOR OF THE SOUTH CHURCH IN PORTSMOUTH, N.H.

WITH THE

CHARGE AND RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

---

BOSTON:

CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY,

111, WASHINGTON STREET.

1857.

transfer from Holton Library
6/28/04

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,
22, SCHOOL STREET.

# SERMON.

1 Cor. xi. 23: "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you."

On any other ground than this, who would dare to assume the office into which we induct our young brother this evening? To be, as the minister must be to a certain extent, the guide and keeper of a collective conscience; to be deemed, as, in spite of all his disclaimers, he must inevitably be by the younger and less enlightened members of his flock, an infallible oracle of moral and religious wisdom; to modify, even where he does not mould, the moral sense and standard of scores or hundreds of families, — who would venture to take upon himself such a charge, except as furnished and instructed for it by a higher discretion and a surer wisdom than his own? Indeed, on what other ground can the ministerial office stand even the test of common sense? The idea of dependence on one's own intuitions for his views of truth and duty, if followed to its legitimate results, would vacate every pulpit in Christendom. For why are not the intuitions of the people as worthy of reliance as those of their professed teacher? or, if he is above authority, why are not they equally so? If he has no need of going to Christ, for still stronger reasons have they no need of going to him, for counsel. He often has

in his congregation older, abler, better men than himself, on whom it were the height of arrogance for him to impose his own self-derived notions of the true, the right, and the good; and, if he really speaks not from authority higher than his own, he should beg such persons, at least, either to stay away from church, or to change places with him. Were it not so lamentable, no spectacle could be more consummately ridiculous than that of the mere stripling who stands up before a congregation, in which are men of mature wisdom and women in the ripened beauty of holiness, and professes to take his position above prophets, apostles, and the very Saviour; to look down upon the gospel as obsolete or obsolescent; and to give forth his own (so-called) intuitions as the sole standard of truth and mirror of duty. But, if a revelation has indeed been made, then may the mind ingenuous, honest, fitly trained and devoutly consecrated, serve not inaptly as an interpreter, even for its superiors in years, ethical experience, and spiritual wisdom.

In what I have said, you will not understand me as denying the essential importance of clear and keen spiritual intuition as a qualification for the ministry. It is as essential as the office of the natural eye is to the explorer and discoverer in the realms of space and of scientific research. But what the eye is without the light that makes the creation manifest, spiritual intuition is without those luminous rays concentrated in divine revelation, and streaming thence on man and duty, providence and heaven.

I suppose that the conceit of wisdom was never so rife as at the present time. The last thirty years have witnessed more numerous and prouder conquests of science and art over nature than had been won for as many centuries before. Man yokes the most subtile elements to the car of his industry, — makes the sun his engraver, the lightning his courier. To his keen analysis, the earth and the heavens

unveil mysteries hidden from creation until now. He reads the tilted strata on the mountain-side as if they were a printed book; he maps celestial spaces and distances as he would draw a plan of his field. Now, it cannot be denied, that, with this vast and rapid progress in material knowledge and skill, there is, in some quarters, an increased indifference to revealed religion. It is not a tendency to be traced in the highest order of intellect; for the truly great men of no former age have been so almost exclusively religious and Christian men as are those of our own. But the phenomenon of which I speak may be discerned extensively among the knowing and ingenious, the shrewd and the adroit, the practically wise. Among them, we often encounter a feeling, which, were it to take voice, might deliver itself in some such utterance as this: "Man in the nineteenth century is adequate to be his own religious teacher. The Bible was well enough for an ignorant age; but the civilized world has outgrown the need of it. The race is too enlightened any longer to receive truth on trust, to believe any farther than it can verify its belief, or to adopt any other conclusions than such as it reaches by its own research." In fine, spurning at authority is one of the most prominent and dangerous characteristics of our times; and I have thought that I could not better meet the needs and fitnesses of an occasion like the present — the institution of a new ministry in the midst of an intelligent, active, and enterprising community — than by inviting you to consider with me how much this feature of the present age indicates, and how far it represents the actual truth.

I would say at the outset, that this feature by no means marks the degree of maturity which it professes. If we may draw an analogy from the life of the individual, it is rather a token of immature development. The mere infant believes and submits; but there is a certain and not very advanced period of adolescence, when, in the rapid growth

of knowledge, desire, passion, curiosity, and the active powers, the child feels qualified to assume the reins of self-government, doubts the wisdom of his elders, and deems himself adequate to solve all doubtful questions, to pronounce oracular opinions, and to form judicious plans for his own future. Well is it for him, if he is not permitted, as was the fabled Phaëton by his over-fond father, to guide the fiery coursers, and thus to illustrate the profoundness of his wisdom in utter overturn and ruin. A few years pass, and he ripens into self-distrust, — learns, as in his infancy, to repose on a higher wisdom, to submit to rightful authority, and to recognize the narrow limits of his own soundest knowledge and best discretion. I doubt whether contempt of authority, prevalent in a community or a generation, denotes any thing else than what it indicates in the individual mind ; namely, juvenile vanity and foolhardiness. Ages wiser than our own will be more humble and trustful.

I would now attempt to show you that the world needs not less, but even more, than at any previous period, the principle of authority in religion, — the simple " Thus saith the Lord " of revelation, — the positive testimony of inspiration sustained by miracle. I can best serve my purpose by adducing certain departments of truth, in which this need is not only manifest, but all the more urgent on account of the elements of progressive civilization and intelligence now in rapid development.

The relation of God to the individual soul constitutes one of these departments. It forms a very large portion of every real or professed revelation ; and I know not what source of information concerning it we have independently of revelation. I gratefully admit that science opens vast and soul-kindling views of the divine attributes, which revelation does not begin to impart. One might study his Bible for a lifetime without acquiring any conception of the im-

mensity of the domain governed by the Divine Providence; of the wisdom in adaptation and harmony in purpose that pervade the universe; of the boundless sweep comprehended in that infinite unity of will, plan, and administration. Science does, indeed, minister to adoration; it cherishes the spirit of worship; it expands and intensifies our thought of omnipotence; it crowds an ever-growing fulness of meaning into that all-embracing word, — God. But does it not at the same time remove God farther from us, hopelessly complicate our personal relations with him, and even suggest grave doubts whether such relations exist?

Let me explain. Were I a savage resident on some little island, strand, or valley, and did the horizon bound my knowledge of the creation, I should feel that I was by no means an insignificant portion of a universe so limited; and, if I attained to some vague conception of a Deity, I should certainly deem myself of importance enough for him to care for me, to listen to my prayer, to help me in peril, or to ward off from me the shadow of death. But, in the press and throng of myriads of worlds, what am I? Less than a leaf in the forest, or a grain of sand on the sea-shore. How can I imagine myself an object of interest or regard to Him in whose universe this planet, this solar system, dwindles into nothingness, and might be blotted out, and leave not a void that could prompt an inquiring thought in any of the surviving worlds? Can I rise of myself to any possible conception of a relation which the Creator of such a universe bears to me, or I to him?

I cannot even conceive of his moral attributes. His power and wisdom I can in part take into my view; and, where thought fails, I can hide its poverty by calling them infinite. But my own moral attributes are so complicated with my finite and dependent condition, that I know not how to transfer them in thought to an infinite Being. Thus I can perform no action without a motive; and, with me, motive is

equivalent to expected self-gratification. But in infinite fulness there can be no room for self-gratification, and therefore none for motive in the human sense of the term. Yet, on the other hand, the very boundlessness of his attributes renders the conception of necessity equally abhorrent from his nature.

Then, again, as to the divine benevolence, I behold indeed traces of its prevalence in the universe; but I behold, at times I feel, intense individual privation, pain, and suffering. How know I that God is concerned with or cares for individual happiness; that his general beneficence does not merge all reference to the needs or interests of individuals; that, in the competition for his bestowments upon collective humanity, individuals are not left recklessly to thrust one another aside, or to tread one another down?

Or, if God extends his care over my physical well-being, does he care for my conduct? I can do him no good; his fulness I cannot make fuller; his happiness I cannot enhance. Nothing that I can say or do can be of any service to him. Do I, then, stand in any relation of moral obligation or responsibleness to him?

These are questions to which human science cannot give even approximate answers, and which, as I have indicated, it only involves in greater difficulty than they bear to the ignorant mind. Reason must have premises for her conclusions; and here the very premises are hidden in the depths of the Supreme Intelligence. Problems of this whole class can be solved only by revelation; and it was well said concerning them by one of the wisest of the ancients, "It is not possible to know these things, except a man were taught them by God himself, or by some person who had received them from God."

Immortality is another subject, on which we must needs look to revelation for the grounds of our confident belief. Indeed, so far as unaided reason is concerned, I am inclined

to think that man is more likely to believe in immortality in lower than in higher stages of intellectual development. To the savage, who never uncovers a grave or asks what becomes of a dead body, it seems not unnatural to imagine its passage into some under-world, where the implements buried with the dead man shall come into use again, where the servants slain at his funeral shall again do his bidding, and even "his faithful dog shall bear him company." He is not enough of a casuist to start objections, or to look behind the venerable tradition of a life beyond death, — a tradition which is, in the judgment of not a few careful thinkers, more probably the surviving remnant of a primeval revelation, than the spontaneous growth of the human mind in the infancy of its culture. But the almost civilized Chinese have hardly the idea of a future life. Infidel France threw away her hope of immortality with her Bible; and infidel Germany (less worthy to be so termed than in the last generation), retaining the Bible, but converting its miracles into myths and its inspiration into the development of man's natural powers, denies the resurrection, and substitutes for the re-awakening of human souls the loss of all conscious identity, and the re-absorption of all human into Divine Being; while that Divine Being is not a personal God, but matter first rising into self-consciousness through the human organism.

Meanwhile, life is worth more to us than it would have been in a ruder age, inasmuch as it is richer, more full of thought, more varied in experience. It seems to me that I should have very little love of life if my days were passed in the alternation of the chase, the surfeit, the battle, and the war-dance; my home a wigwam, a cavern, or a hollow tree; my mind hardly open to the rudiments of material knowledge, and without a thought appertaining to the realm of abstract ideas. The pulses of my spiritual being would beat so languidly, that I should be indifferent when

its last throb came; and the so-called fortitude of the savage at the stake is mere apathy in the approaching loss of a life which has nothing in it that seems worth saving. But introduced as we are to the higher realms of thought, ushered into the majestic temple of knowledge, with faculties fast developing, and laying hold on objects that awaken the intensest interest; with souls in all their powers large and full, crowded with vivid emotions, pressing on toward higher attainments, always on the threshold of new experiences longed for and sought after, — life is made immeasurably more precious to us, and immortality becomes immeasurably more our felt need.

But whence our assurance of continued life? Science has no analysis of the elements of being that can dissect out from that which perishes the germ of immortality. Every thing that analysis discloses is perishable. Even the general beneficence of the Deity gives us no assurance of a life to come; for that beneficence may be as fully justified in an endless succession of dying lives as in the endless life of the individual. Increased knowledge detects the lameness of our reasoning on insufficient premises, and suggests ever new difficulties and objections. Only one voice has answered the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" and that voice, if it were a priceless boon to the unenlightened, is a still profounder need of those who have a life more ample and more highly endowed; who have therefore more to lose by annihilation, — more which they would crave to keep unto life eternal.

Increased cultivation, then, does not and cannot supersede the revelation of immortality, or diminish our dependence on Him from whose re-animated form the burial-garments dropped to show us that man cannot die. It may, indeed, so crowd the active period of life with transient interests as to make us heedless of what lies beyond: but the time must come, when, with all that makes life a perpetual and im-

measurable blessing present to the mind, we must stand on the confines of this earthly being, and look into the dim and doubtful future; and I do not believe that the wisest man living will be able to probe that unfathomed depth, and to gaze hopefully into that mysterious future, except as he tracks the path of the ascending Redeemer, and hears all along that glorious way the echo of his words, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Those who deny miracle, yet profess to believe in immortality, have, so far as I know, without a solitary exception, been nurtured in the simple faith of the Scriptures; and their hope of immortality has clung to them while they threw away all on which it depended. The teachers of this class have drawn up the ladder on which they mounted where they stand. They inculcate a faith possible to them only because they once were Christians, impossible to their disciples. A generation trained under their auspices, and grovelling in the rayless quagmire of infidelity, would show, in lives without God and deaths without hope, that there is indeed no other name than Christ's given among men whereby they may be saved.

To pass to another head of discussion. The revealed sanctions of duty are more than ever needed in an age of superior cultivation and material wisdom. The sphere of human duty is vastly enlarged; responsibilities are enhanced and multiplied; temptations are stronger. The same influences that stimulate the mental faculties, stimulate also many of the fiercest desires and passions. Cupidity and ambition become more intense. Nay, through the refinements of luxury and the appliances of artificial life, the bodily appetites acquire added power, are aggravated by the allurements of society and example, and tend to greater recklessness and deeper guilt. Self-government is harder for civilized than for savage man; for he has more to govern,—

a larger, a more diversified, a more stubborn empire to keep in subjection. He therefore is only in greater need of a government higher than his own, of the mandates of the Omnipotent, of sanctions that cannot fail, of a retribution that cannot linger or slumber. He needs a knowledge of duty which desire, appetite, and passion cannot obscure; vouchers for obligation which rest on the basis of absolute certainty; an award which he cannot even imagine as liable to doubt, but which bears to his thought the seal of the divine veracity, the signature of the omniscient God.

For the reasons that have been adduced, our age is in the more intense need of revelation in proportion to its extended culture, its enlarged domain of being, and its more ample possession of knowledge and wisdom as to material things. God, immortality, duty, responsibleness, retribution, — these are topics on which earthly science sheds only the faintest rays, and, in suggesting doubts and difficulties, surrounds even what feeble light it gives with a deep penumbra. So far, then, as religion, its truths, institutions, and ordinances, receive less than the former implicit deference, it is not because the world is learning to do without them, but because it is too intensely occupied with material objects to be conscious of its wants, its needs, its cravings. That this last is the case, we have indeed melancholy proof. What our age witnesses is not an increase of spiritual wisdom, but a diminished interest in spiritual things; not a growing ability to read the soul's mysteries without the Bible, but a growing willingness to leave the soul's mysteries unread. Yet there still lies around us the universe of the unknown, the unexplored, on which revelation alone has written the name of God; on which Jesus alone has inscribed the dearer name, — Our Father. And there still lies before us the great mystery of death and a future being, which Jesus alone has penetrated, and than whose

no other hand has drawn aside the veil that covers it. Not a surmise of philosophy has approached the clearness of his words; not a speculation apart from his gospel has borne any semblance to the consistency and credibility of his teachings. Wisdom, in its widest range, falls within the circuit of his revelation; fancy, in her boldest flight, droops beneath the eminence on which he stands. Let the soul be conscious of her being, her capacities, her needs; let her search for the meaning of hidden things; let her inquire what shall be in the eternal future; and offer her in the one hand all that man for these six thousand years has struck out by patient toil, or daring imagination, or the earnest effort of the reasoning faculties, and in the other what is comprised within the pages of the gospel, — she will hardly cast a glance at the vast mass of hopeful surmise and dimly approximated truth embodied in the former; while in the latter she will find all that she could desire, — her God, her duty, her Saviour, her heaven. Indifference to religion, to revelation, to the express words of Jesus, can affect us only while we are bound up wholly in bodily and material needs, and unconscious of our spiritual nature and destiny. If we will but shut out things seen from our thoughts, and let the soul utter her own voice, — a voice which has not become wholly dumb in any soul of man, — it will be in the words of the loyal apostles: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

It is to a ministry founded on and guided by this divine authority that we now consecrate our brother. May he utter here only that which he has received from the Lord! — his own, indeed, through the experience that has tested it, through the loving piety that has reproduced it in his daily life; but Christ's, ever Christ's, in its source and its inspira-

tion. Thus teaching, thus living, may he be for lengthened years a faithful and successful ambassador of the Lord Jesus, surrounded on earth by the seals of his ministry, beholding in the ever-nearer future the crown of his rejoicing in the presence of his glorified Redeemer!

# CHARGE.

BY REV. DR. CONVERS FRANCIS, OF CAMBRIDGE

---

It is with great pleasure, my young friend, that I stand here on this occasion, so full of hallowed interest to us all, to offer you words of sacred counsel. From the wide range of topics included in every view of a Christian minister's duties, of course a very limited selection must be made. I will attempt to present a few suggestions, which I trust may be neither inappropriate nor of light importance.

1. Let me begin by reminding you of the obligation to make your own inward life fervent and progressive. I begin with this, because without it no part of your great work can be well done; and because with it, by the blessing of God, every part may be well done. If there be a man in the world who has constant need to feed his spiritual faculties, that man is the minister of Christ; for *there*, in the depths of his nature, lies, and must ever lie, the living spring of his strength. Let me, then, charge you to rest satisfied with no past or present culture. Place yourself ever under the life-giving tuition of God. Seek always to approach the measure of the "perfect man" in Christ by growth in the divine life, by ever nobler thoughts, and more quickening insight into God's truth. Rest is good only when it gives an outfit for yet more active progress. There may be idleness in the soul, when there is a showy bustle in the life. You want both breadth and intensity of spirit, that you may not mistake official routine for the true and great work. A minister may be chilled into indolence by influences that

grow up around him silently and unseen; and one must say to him, as a distinguished traveller said to his companions amidst the benumbing effects of a cold, mountainous region, "You must keep moving: whoever sits down sleeps, and whoever sleeps dies." I know that your prayer will ever be that which was uttered of old: "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." You will listen, as you have already listened, to the voices from on high, inviting us all onward, which roll forth evermore, multiplied and deepened as one truth starts up at their call and answers to another. Keep your mind ever at school; for the education of the man of God is a life-work here, and an angel-work for ever. Draw nutriment, day by day, from the well-chosen treasures of sound learning. Let your soul become robust in Christian manliness by being much with the masters of divine wisdom, who have looked into the mysteries of the kingdom of God with the light of profound experiences. The deep meaning of the lessons of the past, as it quickens the present task into a life-giving power for the future; the pages of those blessed Scriptures, radiant with the inspiration of minds in union with God; above all, the words of Him who spake as man never spake, and his character, in itself a revelation, standing alone on the wide records of moral history "like a star, that dwelt apart," — these are your teachers. And where are the teachers whose wisdom is not as foolishness compared with these? First live upon the truth yourself; and then, I am sure, you will have something to say to others that shall give them life. I know you too well to believe that you can ever regard the mind of the Christian minister as a machine, into which texts are to be dropped, that by some mechanical process they may come out manufactured into what are called sermons. If the minister be not a spiritual agent, who, having gathered into his own soul the power of that Divine Word which is ever working around him, and should be at work within him, sends it forth as a fresh, quickening movement, — if he be not this, he is nothing. God's truth must burn within him, and struggle to find vent; so that he may realize in his own province the experience of Milton, when he spoke of

> "Thoughts that rove about,
> And loudly knock to have their passage out."

I know you will be a faithful, painstaking student, for your own sake, and for the sake of your divine work. But you will also remember, there is another and deeper culture than that of study. George Fox, with his simple-hearted, honest fervor, tells us, that, "as he was walking in a field on a First-day morning, it was discovered to his understanding, that to be bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to make a man to be a minister of Christ." This is an undeniable verity; and you and I need, I suppose, no peculiar discovery to make us believe it. Familiarity with divine things, without a living, personal interest in them, is a condition full of peril to the religious teacher. Theology, without spirit-life, may only harden and debase the heart. He whose work compels him to be conversant with the discussion of heavenly things is not therefore necessarily a religious man, any more than the printer, who is employed in setting up and arranging the letters of a book, is necessarily a learned man. I charge you, then, that you do not suffer your soul, through want of the divine nutriment, to become feeble or frigid. Make your office, not a profession, but the outgrowth of your own inward life. While you value, as you ought, the discipline of a logical mind, value far more, I beseech you, the better discipline of the Holy Spirit. Cherish, both in yourself and in others, a whole freedom to grow into the light of truth under the blessings of love; and welcome from every quarter whatever may lead you still onward and upward.

2. Let me charge you to make all your work, both in the pulpit and in the pastoral office, a deep reality to yourself and to your people. This, indeed, will follow of course from what I have just said. I do not prescribe what your work shall be, — how much or how little: that must be left to your own judgment, guided by the Spirit of God. But, whatever your work may be, I say, make it all a fresh, living reality. If possible, let there be in it nothing which is done merely because something *must* be done. Let it be seen that you are not a sentinel pacing his rounds to guard cold decencies or dead formulas. In every walk of life, our times are keen and stirring times, impatient of pretence and shams; and they demand in the ministry, not a respectable functionary merely, but a real man among real men. It has been said in a tone of satire,

which is too indiscriminate, but which I wish it could be affirmed there is nothing in the condition of the church to justify, that "the preacher, instead of being a living force, has faded into an emblematic figure at christenings, weddings, and funerals; or, if he exercise any other function, it is as keeper and feeder of certain theologic dogmas." So far as this is true, it is because the ministry contents itself with the spiritless decorum, the stereotyped formalities, which with "drowsy tinklings lull the distant fold." By such a standard, you, I know, will never measure your service. You, I am confident, will carry into your labors for this people the warmth and freshness of a true heart. From such a position, your preaching will be both doctrinal and practical in the highest sense. Your faith will have little to do with negations, which leave the spirit cold and famished. It will be a holy, earnest affirmation, springing out of the great truths which regenerate the soul, and bring it into union with God. Your doctrinal preaching will proclaim that law of life in Christ Jesus, which alone makes men free from the law of sin and death. I cannot commend to you *controversy* in the pulpit; but *doctrinal* preaching, such as I have mentioned, is always needed, and is now one of the great wants of our times: I mean the exhibition of the peculiar, primal, renewing principles of the gospel; the unfolding of these in their application to the actual problems which the living soul is ever working out in the history of its experience; the exposition of them in the whole length and breadth of their meaning, — in their rebukes, their demands, their encouragements. Never forget how much better a thing is this vital exhibition of gospel truth, in its large measure and its holy significance, as it deals with the actual wants of the soul, than that routine of discussion which rings its charges for ever on the watchwords of an arranged creed, or contents itself with combining the dry bones of technical theology into a symmetrical skeleton, kept as a specimen of what in other days, perhaps, had life. We want not so much what our books call doctrinal systems, as the life-giving principles which lie embedded in doctrines, and give them all their permanent value. I do not decry creeds; they are good in their place: but they are good for the pulpit only when they meet the necessities or move on the track of spiritual life. The same

habit of looking at the reality of things, which I have commended, will also give you the true idea of practical preaching. You will at once perceive that it aims far higher than the ethics of expediency; that it does not waste its labor on the poor task of attempting to lay the virtues, or the semblance of the virtues, of the Christian life *upon* the character by outside fastenings. No: it works from within outwardly; on the principle, that the life which man lives in the flesh he must live by faith in the Son of God; that if he would, in any just sense, be a good moral man, he must abide in the presence of the great truths which take hold on eternity. Christian morality is the flower and fruit of Christian principle, growing under the sunlight of heaven, and watered with the dews of heaven. The pulpit instruction which, instead of fluttering on the surface, goes straight forward to this central point, is the true practical preaching: for, this point being once gained, the virtues and duties in detail grow as from a living root; and, when they are thus seen in the light of eternity, they receive a far deeper meaning, and are clothed in far richer beauty.

Thus, by aiming at the most vital reality both as to faith and life, you will carry your hearers *forward*, instead of repeating what already lies in their minds fruitless and lifeless. They will be made to feel that religion is not simply a *useful* thing, as the phrase goes; a good police regulation; a commodity, to be estimated, like other commodities, by its value in the market, and worth almost as much as the steam-engine or the cotton-mill: but that it is man's *life*, the ground and the consummation of his being; so that, if it be struck away, his whole nature is left a poor, maimed, deserted thing; and that you can no more speak of it as merely a profitable appendage to society, than you can speak of the beating of the heart as simply a *convenient* thing for the animal system. Without this steady, thorough reality to hold up the preacher's work as with a right arm of strength, it cannot long be of any value. Let no minister expect the wonder recorded at the burial of Elisha to be renewed; for men will not be brought to life by the bones of a *dead prophet*.

Under this head, too, let me advise you to make your *pastoral* relation vital and truthful. I assume that you are to have that

affectionate interest in those for whom you labor which will of course lead you to see them often and know them well. Dr. Chalmers observed very justly, that if a clergyman has not familiar personal intercourse with his people, then, notwithstanding his bodily juxtaposition, he is in fact *a non-resident* among them. But remember that this intercourse, if you would have it either satisfactory to yourself or salutary to your parish, must be, not a ceremony, but a reality. The true idea of pastoral visiting is not fulfilled by a perpetual round of unmeaning calls, — as if he, who in a given time can accomplish the most of this, best meets the claims of his office, — but by the habitual, informal associations which a Christian man and a Christian friend creates for himself in every part of his parish, when he places himself spontaneously in the easy, natural forms of social acquaintance, and carries into these the blessing of a kind, loving heart, and of an enlightened, serious mind, as remote from all painful stiffness as from the polished frivolity and wearisome falseness of conventional society. Do not let the preacher and the pastor "look opposite ways, like the double face of Janus;" but let your ministerial character in and out of the pulpit have the unity and harmony of Christian truthfulness. Here I may add, let not your feeling of responsibleness be of that vague sort, which only distresses the mind, without imparting to it any healthful action. Confused statements on this point, I doubt not, have filled the heart of many a young minister with perplexing and fruitless agitation as to what he should do or expect. You are, indeed, under a very solemn responsibleness; but it is a condition defined by a clear and intelligible obligation, — the obligation to lay the truth of God before others with all the power you can command, just as that truth is given to your own soul, and to carry into all relations and all modes of action the influences which a man of Christ-like heart sends forth from such spiritual culture as he can attain. Properly speaking, you are not the curate of any man's soul, — for the simple reason, that God has constituted every man the curate of his own soul. With a spirit such as I have described, your ministry, without an oppressive anxiety for specific results, must in the best sense be successful; it must open a fountain from the renew-

ing Spirit of God, at which many will be refreshed and strengthened, whether they can tell you of it or not; it must be like the life-stream of the beautiful spring-time, which, unseen, wins out the blossoms, and unfolds them at length into the ripe fruit. Amidst all our discouragements, God be thanked that we often work with a blessed effect when we know the least of it. We must work with faith; and, by a law of God, faith is never forlorn.

3. I must remind you, that upon every minister of Christ the general interests of humanity and righteousness have a claim, which he is bound in some way to meet. Your first and nearest duty is always to your parish; and let nothing tempt you to neglect that. But there is a duty which you and every Christian teacher owe to the moral welfare of the community at large. Between these obligations there is no discrepancy: on the contrary, each of them may assist and quicken the other. The fashion of our day runs in favor of large, organized operations, requiring every one to ride in some troop, and to perform prescribed evolutions and exercises, with the intimation that he cannot otherwise keep up with the march of the times. You are not bound to pledge yourself to any of these modes of action, however excellent others, judging perhaps correctly for themselves, may deem them. If you do adopt them, I warn you not to suffer the freedom of your own soul to be crushed by acting in masses and with masses. But, whatever you may think of these modes of action as a man and as a Christian teacher, you will feel that you cannot push aside the great questions in which God's law of right is deeply concerned, and say that you have nothing to do with them. I rejoice that it is characteristic of our times, that a voice cries out of the heart of humanity for a far more thorough application of the Christian doctrine of justice, love, and brotherhood. This is not to be stifled by calling it the cry of disorderly fanaticism. It is not so: it is the utterance of a very profound, sober, earnest feeling from the depths of the moral nature. The searching eye of men too wise and good to be trifled with is fixed more and more keenly upon the dark, sad wrongs which lie heavily on communities, and must sooner or later draw down a fearful retribution from Him who sent his Son "to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives," and

to announce the law of man's brotherhood with man as a divine law. I exhort you to regard these questions as religious questions. Place them under the light of Christian truth and Christian righteousness; look at them, thus placed, with your own eyes, not through the eyes of another: then they will become to you solemn, I may say holy, subjects. You will deal with them as a religious man, responsible to the spirit of Christ for what he thinks and what he does. Amidst the din of passionate contention, which is usually more or less unwise, discipline yourself to the habit of listening reverently to the voice of God's truth, as it rises through your own inward convictions, and not to the voice of partisan agitation on any side. Then I think you will feel, and others will feel with you, that the honest and hearty love of humanity and right, of man's freedom and man's progress, is "part and parcel" of the gospel according to Christ and his apostles, and that you cannot consent to ask of men whether you may defend these great and sacred interests. You must have a free pulpit, a pulpit free to speak the plain truth of God on every question of private and public morality, or you cannot have a Christian pulpit. In ancient days, the Church deemed it — and those to whom she spoke deemed it — her duty to look out sharply from her watch-towers over the land, and admonish men with deep solemnity of the moral judgments of God's law. Has the time for that office passed away? Can it ever pass away? You, I am sure, will never allow yourself to bend divine truth out of its course because a popular or profitable sin stands in its way. Your plea will be, "This is what the Everlasting Righteousness saith: now, 'whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.'" More than a century ago, Jonathan Edwards said to a clergyman at his ordination, "You are called to be a lamp in God's temple, and a star in the spiritual world." If this be true, — and is it not? — then you, by virtue of your office as a minister, are one of the constituted guardians of Righteousness, both private and public. Christendom has for ages had its national churches and its sectarian churches, — its churches of doctrine, its churches of ritual, and its churches of priestly power. It is high time that it should have a Church of Humanity, — one that places at its foundation love

to man, and reverence for man as a child of God; the doctrine of human brotherhood, which is one of the great vital doctrines of Christ, — a doctrine on which I wish we were as anxious to be orthodox as we are on some of our speculative points of theology. The church of the future, I trust, is to be more and more the Church of Humanity. I ask you to remember, that, in that Church of Humanity, you are bound to be a true and faithful minister.

But I have already occupied too much time, and must close my remarks. I cannot, however, deny myself the pleasure of saying, that my acquaintance with you during your theological education has surrounded your entrance into the ministry with the fairest and brightest hopes in my mind. Go forth, my young brother, to your good work; and may the blessing of God and the spirit of the Saviour go with you! Preach Christ as you find Christ in the Scriptures and in your own soul. Never cease to pray for "the grace that shall be sufficient for you, and for the strength that shall be made perfect in your weakness." It was a good saying of a pious divine, that he had read of many wicked popes, but that the worst pope he ever met with was Pope *Self*. Remember that self-dependence is weak; but that, if you rest on God, you shall be strong. Let me remind you of the prayer of Jesus for his disciples: "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." As long as you live, be it your main endeavor to stand in the line of those by whom that moral glory is received and transmitted from age to age, — that brotherhood of the faithful, which commenced with those who first heard the Great Teacher, has continued unbroken since, and will at length be gathered together above.

# RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

BY REV. F. FROTHINGHAM.

---

My Friend and Brother, — The place which I fill in these services, I occupy in virtue of a threefold call. Your own friendship has assigned to me the pleasant duty of extending to you a brother's welcome to the great work of your life; the churches, whose representatives have assembled at this important hour to lend the sanction of their presence and the fervor of their prayers to the solemnities of this occasion, have chosen me as the mouthpiece of their welcome; and my own heart, grateful and glad to welcome one to the work of the gospel, who, I believe, will bear its standard high, who is ready to take his place in the van of duty, and who will not flinch in the battle between righteousness and sin, — my own heart, I say, bids me hither to extend to you the hand of its fellowship and regard.

And yet my heart trembles even while my lips utter the words of welcome; for it knows that the work to which you consecrate yourself to-day, though glorious, is yet full of trial and of peril. It will put your manliness to its test. It is a *work*, indeed, not a play. It demands the noblest exercise of your noblest power. It calls for the wisdom of the serpent, and the harmlessness of the dove. It demands the earnestness of the enthusiast, the seriousness of the devotee, the patience of the watcher, the knowledge of the man of the world, the faith and love of the ripe Christian. Never were its claims more imposing than now. Men shall tell you that it has ceased to be one of the needs of society; that its day has ended. But, my brother, you know better. A glance over the

surface of human life, especially as it develops itself in the unlicensed freedom of this land, shall show how great — yea, how terrible — is the need of the preacher of repentance, of the proclaimer of God's glad tidings, of the watchman who shall give warning, of the prophet who shall speak with a "Thus saith the Lord." Sin abounds. It enthrones itself in the high places of the land, and there sets forth principles that make Humanity blush and Religion hang her head for shame; yes, wields the power of this mighty nation in the service of that abomination of crime and meanness, — human slavery. It enters the sacred arena of political action to drive thence justice, honor, truth, and the fear of God. In the temple of Commerce it erects its soulless idol, — money; and promises men the empire of the world, if they will but fall down and worship that. Into the precincts of the home it comes, in the glittering but evil garb of luxury and fashion, to steal thence the household gods, whose presence makes that sanctuary holy and dear. Even into the temple set apart for the worship of Almighty God it enters, and puts its veto on his unpopular word. Yea, in the holy of holies of the individual soul, made by God for his indwelling presence, it dares to establish itself, to poison the fountains of life, and hence destroy the love of truth, foster the evil spirit of selfishness, and fill the soul, where God's spirit should for ever burn, with the dismal gloom of ignorance, guilt, and misery. These principalities and powers of darkness it is one object of the Christian minister's work to dethrone. This alone is a titanic work. It is no holiday pastime. If any fair dreams have possessed you in regard to it, dispel them now. Huge obstacles lie in your way. Sin will not yield without a desperate struggle: it will assail you without; it will attack you within. So long as you let it alone, it may not interfere with you; it may flatter with fair words, and charm with soft caresses: but, if you approach its stronghold, it will assail you with weapons whose edge you shall feel, though you would scorn to use them. If, however, you would be faithful, you must assail it in its strongholds. One warning let me give. Fight not Satan with his own weapons: he is master of them, — more expert than you can be. Fight him with the sword of the Spirit: against that, he is powerless as a babe.

My brother, I welcome you to this great ministry of righteousness. I welcome you to its trials, its anxieties, its perils, its cares. They shall come; fear not. Times shall come, when you shall stand appalled before the might of human feelings, in the majesty of whose presence you shall seem weaker than an infant; times when the greatness of the trust in your hand shall weigh down your soul with a burden of responsibleness almost too great to bear; times when the littleness of your accomplishment, or the feebleness of your power, shall stand in strange contrast with the greatness of your longing, and the strength of the foe; and, oh! more solemn than all others, times when you shall discover that souls now plastic and tender, souls hungering for the bread of life, souls that place in your word the trust of an implicit affection, are receiving from you the impressions which shall mould them into forms of beauty and power, or stamp them with the impress of weakness and decay.

I welcome you to this great work, with its great trials. Bravely done and borne, they will make you a sinewy soul. They will give you a mighty appetite for immortal food; and God will give that food in glorious profusion, — enough for yourself, and abundance to spare for others.

I have spoken of the ministry of righteousness. But this is not all. There is yet the ministry of God's love revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. O my brother! here is the bread of life indeed. For this bread, human souls, some consciously, many unconsciously, hunger and thirst. Many are seeking the way, the truth, and the life; some —

> "Stumbling and falling in disastrous night,
> Yet hoping ever for the perfect day;" —

others with some faint glimmering of the morning light, but praying ever for a brighter ray; others, however, with brutish purpose, downward tend, careless and thoughtless of the eternal realities in whose midst they move, and on which their very life depends. To the sublime work of revealing the glory of God in the blessed life of Christ; of setting forth the beauty, the worth, the truth, the power, of that life; of shedding a brighter light on the dark passages of human experience and Divine Providence; of awakening

the slumbering, and of giving life to the dead, — I welcome you. To the private study of the sacred records, on part of which the Christ was fed, and whose other part depicts in few but glowing lines the lineaments of the most wondrous manifestation God ever made to man; to hours of patient meditation and lonely prayer, in which the flame of God's spirit shall play around those lineaments until they become all radiant with life divine; to that high intercourse with God and Christ which shall lead your own soul step by step "onward, forward, upward, Godward," until you become purified, renewed, made holy, built up into the likeness of the Master, — I welcome you. And, higher than all, to that most blessed office which shall enable you to give comfort and life to souls bowed down under sorrow and sin, to cheer the drooping, to strengthen the weak, to make glad the desolate, to emancipate the bound, to lead them all into that cheerful, loving, trusting faith which shall make them Christ's freemen indeed, and, uniting you to each other and to God, make you partakers of a joy and blessedness such as eye hath not seen, ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, I welcome you.

My brother, accept this right hand in token of welcome to a fellowship in the work, the cares, the hopes, the joys, of the glorious gospel. May your course be for ever upward! May you be a mighty warrior in the battles of the Lord! May your word come freighted with conviction to sinful souls, and rich in comfort and blessing to those who watch for the morning! May your eye grow clear and your faith strong in the ever-brightening vision of the glorified Christ! May the spirit and presence of God fill you more and more until you become wholly his! May you and your people, sharing the same spirit, grow into one body, of which the living Christ shall be the head!